

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1 1. A system for aggregating demand in group-buying sales conducted
2 across an electronic network, comprising:

3 a computerized facility configured to conduct group-buying sales operably
4 coupled to the electronic network, the computerized facility including specification
5 software executable on the computerized facility and configured to:

6 receive item data from a seller that defines a featured item for a first
7 group-buying sale, wherein the seller transmits the data over the electronic network to the
8 computerized facility;

9 receive sale data from the seller that provides the seller's directions
10 for the first group-buying sale, wherein the seller transmits the data over the electronic
11 network to the computerized facility; and

12 store the received item data and the received sale data in a data
13 repository, wherein the computerized facility uses the received sale data in conducting
14 the first group-buying sale of the featured item defined by the received item data.

1 2. The system of claim 1 wherein the sale data provides directions for
2 at least a second group-buying sale for the featured item, the computerized facility further
3 comprising seller communication software executable on the computerized facility
4 configured to send the seller status data about the first group-buying sale, wherein the
5 specification software is further configured to receive update sale data from the seller that
6 provides updated directions for the second group-buying sale.

1 3. The system of claim 1 wherein the specification software is further
2 configured to:

3 receive seller data from the seller that identifies the seller and provides
4 contact information for the seller; and

5 store the received seller data in the data repository, wherein the
6 computerized facility provides the seller with status information about the first group-
7 buying sale while the first group-buying sale is in progress.

1 4. The system of claim 1 wherein the received item data includes a
2 featured item abstract and wherein the computerized facility further comprises
3 seller/partner filter software executable on the computerized facility and configured to:

4 receive partner abstract terms and partner display criteria from a partner
5 site;

6 retrieve the featured item abstract from the data repository and compare the
7 featured item abstract with the partner abstract terms received from the partner site,
8 wherein the seller/partner filter compares the featured item abstract with the partner
9 abstract terms according to the partner display criteria; and

10 send data about the featured item to the partner site if the seller/partner
11 filter software identifies a match between the featured item abstract and the partner
12 abstract terms according to the partner display criteria.

1 5. The system of claim 1 wherein the specification software is further
2 configured to receive as item data from the seller a featured item name, a featured item
3 description, and an image of the featured item.

1 6. The system of claim 1 wherein the specification software is further
2 configured to:

3 receive as item data from the seller a product/service category for the
4 featured item; and

5 store received the product/service category for the featured in the data

6 repository, wherein the computerized facility arranges displays of featured items for
7 prospective buyers according to each featured item's product/service category.

1 7. The system of claim 6 wherein the computerized facility arranges
2 received featured items and product/service categories in a format organized according to
3 a tree data structure.

1 8. The system of claim 1 wherein the sale data received from the seller
2 by the specification software contains as elements a start date and an end date for the first
3 group-buying sale of the featured item, an initial price for the featured item in the first
4 group-buying sale, and a quantity of the featured item available for sale.

1 9. The system of claim 1 wherein the specification software is further
2 configured to:

3 receive seller data from the seller that identifies the seller and provides
4 contact information for the seller; and

5 store the received seller data in the data repository, wherein the
6 computerized facility uses the seller data to communicate buyer information to the seller
7 at the conclusion of the first group-buying sale for the featured item.

1 10. The system of claim 1 wherein the specification software is further
2 configured to:

3 receive seller data from the seller that identifies the seller and provides
4 contact information for the seller;

5 create a seller account for the seller on the computerized facility; and
6 store data describing the seller account in the data repository.

1 11. A system for aggregating demand in group-buying sales conducted
2 across an electronic network, comprising:

3 a featured item set-up module configured to assist sellers provide data that
4 describes featured items to be sold in group-buying sales conducted on a computerized
5 system in communication across an electronic network with buyers;

6 a group-buying set-up module configured to assist the sellers provide data
7 that directs the computerized system in conducting the group-buying sales for the
8 featured items; and

9 an account set-up module configured to allow the sellers establish accounts
10 with a group-buying sale host associated with the computerized facility.

1 12. The system of claim 11 wherein the item set-up module, the group-
2 buying set-up module, and the account set-up module comprise software modules
3 executable on the computerized facility.

1 13. The system of claim 11, further comprising:
2 an account management module configured to assist the sellers maintain
3 their accounts on the computerized facility.

1 14. The system of claim 11, further comprising:
2 a payment services module configured to assist the sellers pay for services
3 provided to the sellers by the computerized facility hosting the group-buying sale.

1 15. A system that provides self-service group-buying seller services over
2 an electronic network, comprising:

3 a featured item description component configured to receive a seller's
4 description of a featured item to be sold in a first group-buying sale conducted on a
5 computerized facility coupled to buyers over the electronic network; and

6 a sale parameter component configured to receive the seller's instructions
7 for the group-buying sale and provide the received instructions to the computerized
8 facility.

1 16. The system of claim 15 wherein the seller instructions provide
2 directions for at least a second group-buying sale for the featured item, the computerized
3 facility further comprising a seller communication component configured to send the
4 seller status data about the first group-buying sale, wherein the sale parameter component
5 is further configured to receive update sale data from the seller that provides updated
6 directions for the second group-buying sale.

7 17. A system that provides self-service group-buying seller services over
8 an electronic network, comprising:

9 a first computing system containing software executable on the first
10 computing system, wherein the software is configured to:

11 send first data describing a featured item to be sold in a first group-
12 buying sale to a second computing system hosting a group-buying sale, wherein the first
13 computing system is operably coupled to the second computing system over an electronic
14 network;

15 send second data providing instructions for the group-buying sale to
16 the second computing system; and

17 receive scheduling data about the group-buying sale from the second
18 computing system.

1 18. A method for aggregating demand in group-buying sales conducted
2 across an electronic network, comprising:

3 receiving item data from a seller, the item data defining a featured item for
4 a first group-buying sale, wherein the seller transmits the item data over the electronic
5 network to a computerized facility configured to conduct group-buying sales over the
6 electronic network;

7 receiving sale data from the seller, the sale data providing the seller's

8 directions for the first group-buying sale, wherein the seller transmits the sale data over
9 the electronic network to the computerized facility; and

10 storing the received item data and the received sale data in a data
11 repository, wherein the computerized facility uses the received sale data in conducting
12 the first group-buying sale of the featured item defined by the received item data.

1 19. The method of claim 18 wherein the received sale data provides
2 directions for at least a second group-buying sale for the featured item, the method
3 further comprising:

4 sending the seller status data about the first group-buying sale, wherein
5 specification software executable on the computerized facility is configured to receive
6 update sale data from the seller that provides updated directions for the second group-
7 buying sale.

1 20. The method of claim 18 further comprising:
2 receiving seller data from the seller that identifies the seller and provides
3 contact information for the seller; and

4 storing the received seller data in the data repository, wherein the
5 computerized facility provides the seller with status information about the first group-
6 buying sale while the first group-buying sale is in progress.

1 21. The method of claim 18 wherein the received item data includes a
2 featured item abstract, the method further comprising:

3 receiving partner abstract terms and partner display criteria from a partner
4 site;

5 retrieving the featured item abstract from the data repository and comparing
6 the featured item abstract with the partner abstract terms received from the partner site,
7 wherein a seller/partner filter compares the featured item abstract with the partner

abstract terms according to the partner display criteria; and
 sending data about the featured item to the partner site if the seller/partner
 filter identifies a match between the featured item abstract and the partner abstract terms
 according to the partner display criteria.

22. The method of claim 18 wherein the received item data from the
 seller includes a featured item name, a featured item description, and an image of the
 featured item.

23. The method of claim 18, the method further comprising:
 receiving as item data from the seller a product/service category for the
 featured item; and
 storing received the product/service category for the featured in the data
 repository, wherein the computerized facility arranges displays of featured items for
 prospective buyers according to each featured item's product/service category.

24. The method of claim 23 wherein the computerized facility arranges
 received featured items and product/service categories in a tree data structure format.

25. The method of claim 18 wherein the sale data received from the
 seller contains as elements a start date and an end date for the first group-buying sale of
 the featured item, an initial price for the featured item in the first group-buying sale, and a
 quantity of the featured item available for sale, the method further comprising:
 conducting the first group-buying sale in the computerized facility using
 each element of the sale data.

26. The method of claim 18, further comprising:
 receiving seller data from the seller that identifies the seller and provides
 contact information for the seller; and

4 storing the received seller data in the data repository, wherein the
 5 computerized facility uses the seller data to communicate buyer information to the seller
 6 when the first group-buying sale for the featured item concludes.

1 27. The method of claim 18, further comprising:
 2 receiving seller data from the seller that identifies the seller and provides
 3 contact information for the seller;
 4 creating a seller account for the seller on the computerized facility; and
 5 storing data describing the seller account in the data repository.

1 ~~28.~~ A method for aggregating demand in group-buying sales conducted
 2 across an electronic network, comprising:

3 receiving data from sellers that describes featured items to be sold in group-
 4 buying sales conducted on a computerized system in communication across an electronic
 5 network with buyer computer systems;

6 receiving data from sellers that directs the computerized system in
 7 conducting the group-buying sales for the featured items; and

8 establishing seller accounts for sellers with a group-buying sale host
 9 associated with the computerized facility.

1 29. The method of claim 28, further comprising:
 2 assisting sellers provide the data that directs the group-buying sales for the
 3 featured items by providing sellers with a data entry display accessible over the electronic
 4 network.

1 30. The method of claim 28, further comprising:
 2 assisting the sellers maintain their accounts on the computerized facility by
 3 providing sellers with an account status display accessible over the electronic network.

1 31. The method of claim 28, further comprising:
 2 receiving payment from sellers for services provided to the sellers by the
 3 computerized facility hosting the group-buying sale.

1 ~~32.~~ A method that provides self-service group-buying seller services
 2 over an electronic network, comprising:
 3 receiving in a featured item description component a seller's description of
 4 a featured item to be sold in a first group-buying sale conducted on a computerized
 5 facility coupled to buyer computer systems over the electronic network; and
 6 receiving in a sale parameter component the seller's instructions for the
 7 group-buying sale and providing the received instructions to the computerized facility.

1 33. The method of claim 32 wherein the seller instructions provide
 2 directions for at least a second group-buying sale for the featured item, the method
 3 further comprising:
 4 sending the seller status data about the first group-buying sale; and
 5 receiving update sale data from the seller that provides updated directions
 6 for the second group-buying sale.

1 ~~34.~~ A method that provides self-service group-buying seller services
 2 over an electronic network, comprising:
 3 sending first data describing a featured item to be sold in a first group-
 4 buying sale from a first computer system to a second computing system that hosts a
 5 group-buying sale, wherein the first computing system is operably coupled to the second
 6 computing system over an electronic network;
 7 sending second data providing instructions for the group-buying sale from
 8 the first computing system to the second computing system; and
 9 receiving scheduling data in the first computing system about the group-

10 buying sale from the second computing system.

1 35. A computer-readable data transmission medium containing a data
2 structure comprising:

3 (a) a first portion that defines a featured item for a first group-buying
4 sale, wherein the first group-buying sale is conducted by a computerized facility over an
5 electronic network operably coupled to computing systems of potential buyers of the
6 featured item;

7 (b) a second portion that provides directions to the computerized facility
8 for conducting the first group-buying sale; and

9 (c) a third portion that identifies a seller of the featured item.

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1 36. The computer-readable data transmission medium of claim 35
2 wherein the first portion, the second portion, and the third portion are adapted for
3 transmission over an electronic network to the computerized facility.

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1 37. The computer-readable data transmission medium of claim 35
2 wherein the first portion, the second portion, and the third portion are configured for
3 receipt by the computerized facility following transmission over an electronic network,
4 the computerized facility storing the first portion, second portion, and third portion in a
5 data repository.

1 38. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable
2 instructions for performing a method for aggregating demand in group-buying sales
3 conducted across an electronic network, comprising:

4 receiving item data from a seller that defines a featured item for a first
5 group-buying sale, wherein the seller transmits the data over the electronic network to a
6 computerized facility configured to conduct group-buying sales over the electronic

8 receiving sale data from the seller that provides the seller's directions for
9 the first group-buying sale, wherein the seller transmits the data over the electronic
10 network to the computerized facility; and

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